



# NEWS

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

California observes the second annual Senior Safe Mobility Week October 14-20, set aside to show seniors how to keep driving safely, and reinforce the importance of preparing for the time when driving may have to stop.

CHP Commissioner Mike Brown, chair of the Older Californian Traffic Safety (OCTS) Task Force which sponsors the week, says “most seniors don’t expect to stop driving, and we don’t want them to as long as they’re safe. They can drive longer if they work at it; the educational programs now available can show them how.

“Even so, everyone faces the possibility that diminishing skills will mean they have to stop driving. Thoughtful people make a plan. That’s an important message we hope to put across: *Get smart—stay mobile*. Because everyone needs to have options.”

Senior Safe Mobility Week was declared by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, who emphasized that California must “ensure seniors are able to drive safely. It is important for each older person, as well as their families and friends, to evaluate their ability to drive.”

The week’s premiere event is a 1½ day Sacramento Summit October 16-17, where educators, doctors, researchers, aging specialists, traffic engineers, police, therapists and government personnel combine to present the latest information on senior driving and mobility issues. Summit keynote speaker will be Dr. David Manning, regional administrator for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The event will be held at the Hilton Hotel.

Commissioner Brown credited the OCTS Task Force partnership with promoting “progress on many fronts, including educational ventures, police training, highway engineering innovations and advanced driver licensing research.”

The Commissioner said that “not only will the Summit bring a penetrating view of how we can assist seniors, it also will offer all Californians a more complete picture of how aging affects driving. One thing we know already—one size does not fit all because aging is unique to an individual. Some seniors can drive safely into very old age, and some must stop before that time. Our job is sorting that out. We need public support to make that happen.”

The Baby Boom generation begins to retire in a few years and that “huge growth in the senior driver population becomes a major safety challenge for the Highway Patrol because seniors tend to be at much greater risk in crashes. Frailty exaggerates the impact of a collision. Seniors are much more likely to die or suffer severe injury, so crash prevention is vital,” he said.